

SCIENCE & GOVERNMENT REPORT

The Independent Bulletin of Science Policy

Vol. IX, No. 9

P.O. Box 6226A, Washington, D.C. 20015

May 15, 1979

A Short Leash for Carter's Three Mile Panel

A shrewdly conceived, broad membership, and a craftily devised, narrow mandate—that's the basic outline of the 11-member commission that President Carter appointed last month to investigate the Three Mile Island nuclear accident.

The President, it should be recalled—as a step toward understanding this public relations flim flam—is a loyalist, above all: Loyal to the unscrupulous Bert Lance, loyal to his buffoonish brother, Billy, and, as might be expected, loyal to the technology with which he has conspicuously identified himself, first as candidate and now as President—atomic energy.

Whatever else might be said about Mr. Carter, he is not a fair-weather friend. While technical uncertainties and political prudence might have dictated that he remain aloof from the Three Mile Island debacle while

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the crippled reactor was bubbling and the outcome highly uncertain, Mr. Carter took the needless chance of hurrying to the scene of the crisis; there, he invoked his relatively slight professional acquaintance with things nuclear and said that everything was going to be okay; fortunately for him and several hundred thousand people in the vicinity, the worst did not occur—though hindsight now suggests that good luck had as much to do with that outcome as did good engineering.

In any case, the appointment of a Presidential commission was inevitable in the circumstances, since commissions are the ointment that governments apply when they don't know what to do or don't want to do what should be done. However, the process that's been followed in regard to Three Mile Island is a bit much, even for those who gagged on the Warren Commission's flabby investigation of the Kennedy assassination.

The main questions that vex the public on the Pennsylvania accident are, quite simply: What went wrong and what does this tell us about whether we should continue with nuclear power? Public interest in these questions was ignited by this particular accident, but, obviously, public interest is not confined to this one accident. Nevertheless, the President and his image-obsessed cronies responded to the public's legitimate concerns by promising a thorough investigation, while

giving the Commission a mandate that is extremely limited.

In brief, the charge of the Commission is to determine what happened at Three Mile Island, how various public agencies responded to the emergency, and how public information was handled during the crisis. In regard to all these, the Commission is to make recommendations. But it is clear—as can be seen from the accompanying full text of the "Objectives, Scope of Activity, and Duties" of the Commission, the task is not to weigh the risks and benefits of nuclear power and the quality of nuclear performance, matters that the American people would surely like to know more about; rather, it is to look into what happened at Three Mile Island. Even the critical matter of the performance of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is tightly constrained, as can be seen from the charter specifica-

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In Print

Among the non-Communist industrialized nations, the US is still tops in percentage of gross domestic product spent on research and development—2.3 per cent, according to the latest report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The figures (mostly for 1975 and 1976) show Germany with 2.1 per cent, and Japan with 1.7. What's left out is that neither comes close to the US's high expenditures on military R&D.

Newly available from the National Technical Information Service: CIA reports on the People's Republic of China. Included are periodical reports covering "political, sociological, economic, military, scientific, and technological information." For details: NTIS, Springfield, Va. 22161; tel: (703) 557-4650.

Unanticipated Benefits from Basic Research, a 22-page budget-time ode to serendipity, is available without charge from its producer, the National Science Foundation, Publications Unit, 1800 G St. Nw., Washington, DC 20550. Ask for publication NSF 79-7.

Weather Modification: Programs, Problems, Policy, and Potential, a study prepared by the Congressional Research Service, can be obtained without charge by sending a request and a self-addressed mailing label to: Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space, US Senate, Washington, DC 20510.

... Inquiry Strictly Limited to Pa. Accident

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tions, which call for "an evaluation of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's licensing, inspection, operation and enforcement procedures as applied to this facility (SGR's italics)."

If there's any tilt to the membership of the Commission, it is probably unfavorable to nuclear power. There is no one from the nuclear industry, though there are several persons, such as Theodore Taylor, Princeton, and Russell W. Peterson, former head of the Office of Technology Assessment, who are both knowledgeable about nuclear power and critical of various aspects of its management. It's a valuably varied and skilled collection of people, and even if housewife Anne Trunk was included for window-dressing, her appointment ought not to be scoffed at, as has been done by some wisecracks. A mother of six children, she lives near the plant and her views and perceptions merit attention.

The President's Commission has an able staff, ample money (\$1.3 million) and six months to perform its task. It's very likely that it will carry out the job that it was assigned and do it well. What's unfortunate is that nuclear enthusiast Jimmy Carter is more interested in promoting nuclear power than in leveling with the public about whether—even at this late date—it's worth considering the possibility that this technology is just too hot to handle.

What is fortunate, however, is that, with the Warren Commission failings revived by recent Congressional hearings, the task of looking into the general issues of nuclear power will not be set aside just because Mr. Carter is going through the motions of conducting an investigation. Congress is hot on the trail, egged on by the press—which, in turn, is feasting on nuclear documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act.

In the coming months, we'll learn a lot more about the profits and perils of nuclear power, but precious few of the disclosures will come from Mr. Carter's handcuffed Commission.—DSG

The following is from the "Charter for President's Commission on the Accident at Three Mile Island":

Objectives, Scope of Activity, and Duties

The purpose of the Commission is to conduct a comprehensive study and investigation of the recent accident involving the nuclear power facility on Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania. The Commission's study and investigation shall include:

- (a) a technical assessment of the events and their causes; this assessment shall include, but shall not be limited to, an evaluation of the actual and potential impact of the events on the public health and safety and on the health and safety of workers;
- (b) an analysis of the role of the managing utility;
- (c) an assessment of the emergency preparedness and response of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and other Federal, state and local authorities;
- (d) an evaluation of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's licensing, inspection, operation and enforcement procedures as applied to this facility;
- (e) an assessment of how the public's right to information concerning the events at Three Mile Island was served and of the steps which should be taken during similar emergencies to provide the public with accurate, comprehensible and timely information; and
- (f) appropriate recommendations based upon the Commission's findings.

Kemeny Comm. Mailing List

The Kemeny Commission invites the public to get on its mailing list for announcements, schedules of hearings, and so forth. To be added to the list, address your request to: Ms. Barbara Jorgenson, Public Information Director, President's Commission on the Accident at Three Mile Island, Suite 714, 2100 M St. N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

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ISSN 0048-9581

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Independently published by *Science & Government Report, Inc.*, twice monthly, except once each in January, July and August. Annual Subscription: Institutions, \$84.50 (two years, \$149.50); individuals, \$44 (two years, \$75). Editorial offices at 3736 Kanawha St., N.W., Washington, DC 20015. Tel. (202) 244-4135. Second class postage paid at Washington, DC. Please address all subscription correspondence to Box 6226A, Northwest Station, Washington, DC 20015. Reproduction without permission is prohibited. SGR is available on Xerox University Microfilms.

Nuclear Balm from the Engineering Academy

One reason that the National Academy of Engineering is widely regarded with suspicion is that it is loaded with corporate brass who, with few exceptions, have made little or no contribution to engineering.

Another reason is that the Academy of Engineering sometimes does dumb things—a recent case in point being a statement on the Three Mile Island nuclear accident that it distributed to all NAE members. Written by NAE Vice President W. Kenneth Davis, Vice President of the Bechtel Power Corporation, the statement was sent to the members with a covering letter signed by NAE President Courtland D. Perkins. Perkins said that he had asked Davis “to summarize for the benefit of our NAE members some of his observations” on the accident, and that the summary “is similar to that which Mr. Davis presented to the Governing Board of the National Research Council” April 7. “It is our hope,” President Perkins said, “that his paper will give our members a fuller perspective on the events surrounding this incident.”

What then follows from this mandarin of the nuclear power industry is a series of smarmy assurances that everything is really okay with nuclear power and that impressions to the contrary are erroneous.

“It is important to recognize,” says the Davis statement, “that the design of nuclear plants, including the Three Mile Island Unit, is based on detailed consideration of and provisions for virtually every conceivable equipment or human malfunction. For the very unlikely chain of events (such as occurred at Three Mile Island), the criteria are: first, safety for the

public; second, protection of plant personnel; and third, reducing damage to the plant. Clearly, the Three Mile Island Unit accident was accommodated within the “design considerations” for the plant and achieved the first two objectives. The damage to the plant, except for the core, is not believed to be severe in the physical sense, but the cost of cleaning up the plant and restoring it to service will undoubtedly be high and take a long time. . .”

The Davis apology continues: “All forms of energy production without exception have an impact on the environment, health, and safety. While these are broadly acceptable in terms of the benefits for present energy sources, including coal, it is still evident that nuclear power is one of those sources with the least impact—and the events at Three Mile Island have not changed that fact, despite the impressions given by TV and radio programs and the volume of speculative and sometimes distorted information in the press (some of which did present factual and well-balanced reports).

“The lessons of Three Mile Island will surely lead to changes in the design and operation of nuclear plants . . . However,” Davis concludes, “the question is whether what some have called a ‘national disaster’ which did not injure or kill anyone is going to result in termination or atrophy of one of the few sources of energy we can otherwise look forward to with confidence for the next few decades.”

It is with such drivel that NAE President Perkins seeks to give his members “a fuller perspective on the events surrounding this incident.”

Membership of the Three Mile Commission

Following are the members of the President's Commission on the Accident at Three Mile Island, also known as the Kemeny Commission:

• **John G. Kemeny**, chairman, President of Dartmouth College, a mathematician and computer specialist.

Bruce E. Babbitt, Governor of Arizona, a lawyer with a master's degree in geophysics.

Patrick E. Haggerty, head of Texas Instruments until retiring in 1976.

Paul Marks, Vice President for Health Sciences, Columbia University, an MD and biochemist.

Cora B. Marrett, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Wisconsin.

Lloyd McBride, International President of the United Steelworkers of America.

Harry C. McPherson Jr., a Washington lawyer who was a presidential aide in the Johnson Administration.

Russell W. Peterson, recently resigned Director of

the Office of Technology Assessment, now President of the National Audubon Society.

Thomas Pigford, Chairman of the Department of Nuclear Engineering, UC Berkeley.

Theodore B. Taylor, Professor of Aerospace and Mechanical Science, Princeton University, long associated with nuclear reactor design.

Anne Trunk, a Middletown, Pa., housewife, mother of six, and active in various civic organizations.

Senior Staff Members

Bruce T. Lundin, staff director, director of the NASA Lewis Research Center, and head of a number of major investigations for NASA.

Ronald B. Natalie, chief counsel, a Washington lawyer who has been associated with civil rights activities.

Barbara Jorgenson, public information director, on leave from the National Academy of Sciences, where she was director of media relations.

DOD Stonewalling on Aid for Civilian R&D

For aficionados of utter futility, we direct attention to a minor minuet in progress between the General Accounting Office (often referred to as Congress's watchdog) and the Department of Defense.

Back in 1972, the GAO issued a report, "Means for Increasing the Use of Defense Technology for Urgent Public Problems," wherein the Secretary of Defense was urged to encourage "the greater application of existing defense technology at DOD's research and development centers to civil agency problems."

DOD responded that it liked the idea, though, of course, it didn't, since any military lab taking on civilian work automatically invites curiosity as to why it has spare time on its hands. Nonetheless, DOD—as the GAO recounted recently in a perplexed letter to Defense Secretary Brown—"encouraged the military services to participate in efforts to apply laboratory expertise to the solution of problems of civil agencies, distinct from work done for defense-oriented agencies such as AEC and NASA. In subsequent memoranda in 1974, 1976, and 1978," GAO explained to the Defense Secretary, "DOD has continued to formally encourage work for non-defense agencies, although in 1974, a limitation of three per cent of professional staff-years for interagency projects was placed on the individual laboratories."

However, to what certainly should have been the surprise of no one, it turns out that DOD—despite its assurances—actually did almost nothing about taking on civilian work. As GAO states the matter:

"Although the record indicates that DOD recognizes the importance of making laboratory expertise available to others, current policy guidance encouraging work for others does not seem to have significantly changed the practices at most laboratories or their headquarters' management organizations. While some progress has been made since our 1972 report," GAO went on, "the DOD laboratories continue to do very limited amounts of non-defense work for other federal agencies. According to DOD research and development officials, non-defense work rarely approaches the three per cent staff limit imposed on the laboratories in 1974."

Now, how can this be explained? GAO points in the direction of the answer, but doesn't actually get to it. "We noted considerable resistance to the idea of non-defense laboratory work for other agencies," says the watchdog. "A number of research and development officials believe that the laboratories should avoid work for others unless it also directly serves a defense need. It was suggested that the three per cent staff limitation implies that DOD discourages any non-

mission work."

The GAO pointed out that "The Defense Department has the most extensive array of internal research and development facilities in the Federal Government. Without question, those facilities should be primarily dedicated to fulfillment of defense missions. However," says the GAO, "they are also national technical resources, and their utilization should not be artificially inhibited by agency boundaries."

Defense was then asked to "provide clear guidance to its laboratories on the use of their resources to respond to national needs."

What is missing from the GAO's complaint is a recognition of the suicide-avoidance principle in science management. Any DOD laboratory that could spell three per cent of its staff time to take on civilian work is necessarily inviting, first, a budget cut, and then a meat axe.

Times are tough, GAO, and though your objectives are commendable, DOD laboratories have an enviable record for survival long beyond their lapse into scientific senility. They know how to endure, which means that Defense will put out a lot of sweet talk about taking on civilian chores, while regarding those assignments as poison.

If there is a serious intent to make use of military laboratories for civilian research, it can be accomplished very easily: OMB could decree that the labs *must* devote three per cent of their staff hours to tasks from civilian agencies, and back this up with automatic staff and budget cuts if they don't. Very easy—if the people in charge are serious about this, but, unfortunately, they're not.

NSF Awards Waterman Prize

William P. Thurston, a professor of mathematics at Princeton University, has been named the fourth winner of the big annual award—a medal, plus up to \$50,000 a year in research funds for three years—that the National Science Foundation established to honor its founding director, the late Alan T. Waterman.

Thurston, 33, was selected from among 87 nominees by a 12-member panel chaired by Frederick Seitz, former president of Rockefeller University.

The award is limited to scientists under age 35, as evidence of NSF's concern for youngsters in these hard times. Foundation officials take pride in the fact that the cash is for financing the recipient's research, and is not for personal enrichment.

Academic Researchers Eye Industrial Link

With the federal budget stretched tight and the country's political mood likely to keep it that way for a long time, academic scientists are increasingly courting a source of money that many of them once preferred to shun: Industry.

The interest in what was once regarded as tainted money shows up in many discussions these days; what went on at last month's meeting of the American Physical Society was not untypical.

At that session, APS President Lewis M. Branscomb, who is Chief Scientist of IBM, said that academic-industrial research ties would be the "wave of the future." Branscomb didn't fill in details of how and under what circumstances, but some of his academic colleagues stated their preferences.

Like many scientists and administrators, Marvin L. Goldberger, President of the California Institute of Technology, said he believes that the arrangement between Harvard University and the Monsanto Company is the ideal model.

Under the Harvard-Monsanto agreement, the company provides Harvard researchers with funding for a specified period of years for projects of their own choice, but Monsanto gets first crack at the results if it wants to pursue them for commercial purposes. How well this is working out remains to be seen, but there is no doubt that academics elsewhere are envious of the arrangement and would like to get in on it.

There was a time, of course, when industry supplied a large portion of the overall support for basic as well as applied research in this country. The relative importance of that support, however, declined during the 1950's and 1960's, when the federal government began pouring record sums into the universities.

Between 1970 and 1976, for example, federal sources accounted for more than 70 per cent of the total support for basic research in the universities, according to the National Science Foundation. The other 30 per cent, NSF found, was divided among a variety of sources, including the universities themselves, state and local governments, non-profit foundations. Only a small fraction came from industry.

If increased industry support for university research is to expand significantly, both universities and corporations will have to make considerable accommodations.

The universities, for example, will have to find ways to get the results of industry-supported research into scholarly publications without jeopardizing the competitive edge of the companies that pay for the research.

To encourage businesses to boost their financial support of basic research, some universities would like to

see federal and state governments provide incentives. One proposal, for example, would permit income-tax credits for firms that support academic research. Without such credits, businessmen have said they have little reason to divert research funds out of their own programs and into academic institutions.

In general, politicians, have so far been wary of such proposals, largely because they feel a tax-credit system could easily turn into a tax dodge of no benefit to academe, research, or the general public.

Meanwhile, a lot of scientists acknowledge that the greatest obstacle to cooperation between universities and industry is that each wants different kinds of research.

In the past, the universities have been more concerned with basic or fundamental science than they have with applied research. The traditional academic argument has been that too much time and money are poured into applied research which has immediate but often limited payoffs; and too little money goes toward basic research that is riskier but intellectually more

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US-China Sign R&D Pact

Update on the blossoming of Sino-American dealings in science, technology, and related matters:

Commerce Secretary Juanita M. Kreps signed four S&T agreements in Peking last week, providing for exchanges or some sort of collaboration in meteorology, measurements and standards, research-management studies, and oceanography and fisheries.

Under the agreements, Chinese researchers will work at the National Bureau of Standards headquarters, in Maryland, and at the Severe Storm Center, in Oklahoma. In addition, the agreements provide for Americans to assist in computerizing China's weather-reporting system and to set up training programs for Chinese users of American equipment. Deputy Prime Minister Fang Yi signed for his country.

Meanwhile, the committee on Scholarly Communications with the People's Republic of China reports that three senior American researchers will go to China this summer to begin a reciprocal exchange program, and that 12 others will follow later in the 1979-80 academic years. The exchanges are for from three to 12 months.

The three in the vanguard are: Hsai-yang Fang, Lehigh University, who will study soil mechanics and foundation engineering and materials; Frederick Pei Li, National Cancer Institute, cancer epidemiology, and Wei-ming Tu, University of California, Berkeley, Chinese intellectual history and philosophy.

Industrial R&D Executive Tells a Patent Story

While federal science-policy officials go in for much handwringing about the decline of innovativeness in American industry, little or nothing is done about removing some of the government's purposeless obstacles to devising and marketing new products. A candid report on this problem, from the perspective of a small R&D company, was given on April 11 to a Senate Judiciary subcommittee by Arthur S. Obermayer, President of Moleculon Research Corp., Cambridge, Mass. Following are excerpts from his testimony:

When the government is looking for a company to do research and development in a field where we have experience, we are very cautious about submitting a proposal. Even though we may be as well qualified as any bidder, we become concerned that we may compromise our patent rights by accepting a contract. Many government agencies require that small businesses who accept contracts with them not only give the government title to any patents coming out of the work, but also give the government background patent rights; that is, the right to use patents already obtained and paid for by the company. As a further affront, the government usually takes a rather cavalier attitude toward protection of any of the company's proprietary information or "know-how" which is submitted with a proposal. All too often, proprietary information supplied by one company later appears in another company's proposal. It is no wonder that many companies which have important new technologies with significant patent implications, carefully avoid becoming entangled with the government.

Not all research oriented companies view patent rights in the manner I have just described. Some firm's principal business is soliciting government contracts. They attach little or no importance to patent rights and commercialization because obtaining government contracts is an end in itself. Such companies are not necessarily the most qualified to do the work; rather they are the most experienced at writing government proposals. Most defense and aerospace contractors fit this category; however, as the government expands into areas where commercialization is important, it needs contractors who understand and regularly deal in the commercial world. Commercialization or public use is the ultimate goal of most research and development sponsored by the Departments of Energy, Transportation, the Interior, and Health, Education and Welfare. It is ironic that these very agencies whose ultimate goal is to stimulate commercialization of technology normally use very restrictive patent provisions in their contracts whereas the Department of Defense, whose

ultimate goal is not commercialization, is much more reasonable. It normally gives title to inventions to the contractor.

The current patent provisions in government contracts have led to many peculiar situations. Patent provisions that are intended to help civilian agencies often help only the military. Patent provisions that are intended to stimulate the US economy often only provide business and jobs overseas. Perhaps a few examples would be useful.

About two months ago my company had a new idea for an air quality monitoring system. This type of air monitoring system had important potential applications both to the military for the detection of chemical warfare agents and to civilian agencies for the measurement of air pollutants and toxic gases in the workplace. It looked like patents would result when we reduced the idea to practice. Our decision was to submit an unsolicited proposal only to the military agency because if we received a military contract we would have been

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satisfying for its performer.

While they are far from abandoning their old defenses of basic research, many of the campus officials who have been so preoccupied with finances over the past few months are now at least beginning to discuss what some of those compromises might be.

Robert E. Marshak, President of City College of the City University of New York, for example, has suggested that universities set up interdisciplinary institutes devoted to the problems associated with energy problems, the environment, and the development of the Third World.

In its 1980 budget, the National Science Foundation also proposed support for collaborative research which would encourage universities to conduct research on the type of problems industries want to solve.

Without being inside the corporate board rooms it is hard to know just how much all of this talk will interest industry. What's clear, however, is that industry has little interest in science as a cultural activity, and industry also has no yen for supporting research that can be exploited by competitors. There is a reasonably good track record for assisting those research activities that deal with problems common to an entire industry, but when a competitive edge is at stake, industry prefers to control its own research—which means that the free-and-easy atmosphere that characterizes most academic science is not likely to be too appealing to industrial research managers.

Carnegie Institution Makes Science-Policy Appointment

The Carnegie Institution of Washington is branching out a bit into the science-policy field with the appointment of Christopher Wright "as the first staff member specifically appointed to undertake science-policy studies."

Wright, who comes to the Carnegie post from the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, was director of Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Science in Human Affairs (now defunct) from 1966 to 1976, and prior to that held various science-related jobs.

The appointment was announced by Carnegie President James D. Ebert, who took over from Philip Abelson last year. According to a Carnegie announcement, Wright's appointment "comes at a time when the Institution will be looking at its own policy for the coming decade and will be considering the manner in which the Institution should fit into national and international scientific and technical enterprise."

Carnegie, an esteemed organizational oddity on the American scientific landscape, was founded in 1902, and currently operates five major research centers.

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able to retain title to patents developed under the contract. With the two civilian agencies, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and the Environmental Protection Agency, we would have been required to relinquish our patent rights.

As another example, a friend of mine who is President of a four-year-old research and development company had an idea a few years ago for a metal extraction and recovery process that could represent a major break-through in the mining and metal processing industries. In order to obtain government support for the original development, the company had to assign US patent rights to the government, but the company was allowed to retain foreign patent rights. Now, after three years and several hundred thousand dollars of research and development effort, they feel that the process is approaching practical reality. They have explored commercialization with more than ten US companies, most of them in the mining industry. Not one expressed strong interest, principally because exclusive rights could not be offered. Finally, they did find one interested firm—in Japan. They offered and the Japanese company has taken an aggressive position in the pursuit of commercialization. This is a typical case where the US system encourages the export of technology leading to foreign sales, foreign production, foreign jobs, and has an adverse effect on the US economy.

Head of Institute of Medicine Says He'll Leave Next Year

David A. Hamburg has announced that he will leave the presidency of the Institute of Medicine when his five-year term is up, in October 1980.

Hamburg, a psychiatrist, was professor of human biology at Stanford University at the time of his appointment to the IOM post. He says that he will return to academe—though he has not yet settled on where—and will work on health-policy studies, which is a principal activity of the IOM.

According to an IOM spokesman, Hamburg has been having discussions with Harvard President Derek C. Bok about setting up a health-policy study group at Harvard that would report directly to the Harvard President.

Hamburg would be the first IOM president to serve out a full term in the 10-year history of the Institute, which is an appendage of the National Academy of Sciences. The first president, John R. Hogness, left in 1974 to become President of the University of Washington; he was succeeded by Donald Fredrickson, who came from the National Institutes of Health, served at the IOM for about a year, and then returned to NIH as Director in June 1975.

Though Hamburg's departure date is still a good way off, the IOM, perhaps mindful of the mixed record of incumbency for the job, has already set up a committee—chaired by William H. Danforth, Chancellor of Washington University—to find a successor early enough to allow for a comfortable transition period.

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A Close Contest for Directorship of OTA

The appointment April 26 of John H. Gibbons to the directorship of the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) came at the conclusion of a relatively fast but extensive search in which Gibbons just edged out another contender, Robert Morse.

Gibbons, Director of the Environment Center at the University of Tennessee, was among four outside and three inside possibilities that OTA's Congressional board seriously considered. In the first group, besides Gibbons, were: Dennis Meadows, of of "Limits to Growth" fame; Harlan Cleveland, former President of the University of Hawaii, among many other posts; Morse, a former Navy research chief, now Associate Director of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, and Dorothy Simon, the AVCO Corporation's vice president for research, who withdrew from consideration.

The insiders were: Daniel De Simone, OTA's number two leader since its founding, in 1973, and acting director since the recent resignation of Russell W. Peterson; Eric Willis and Joyce Lashof, both assistant directors of the agency.

The final deliberations, following interviews with the candidates, came at a closed meeting of the OTA board, and the selection of Gibbons was announced as unanimous. Though there was never any hot and

heavy argument, Morse was neck and neck with Gibbons when two Senatorial board members, Ernest F. Hollings (D-SC) and Jacob Javits (R-NY) expressed a strong preference for Gibbons. The argument that prevailed was that OTA—after surviving the turbulence of the Emilio Q. Daddario and Peterson regimes—needs an experienced manager, preferably one who can be comfortable with the anonymity that is supposed to accompany Congressional staff roles. This is said to have ruled out Cleveland, who, from his various positions, is not a well-kept secret; Meadows lacked the managerial experience; Morse was a strong candidate, but the members decided that Gibbons was more to their liking.

As for the insiders, the board felt that OTA would be better off with a newcomer.

Gibbons has directed the Tennessee Environment Center since 1974; prior to that, he was Director of Conservation in the Federal Energy Administration for two years, and before that, he spent 19 years at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, where he managed programs in nuclear geophysics and environmental quality. The OTA appointment is for six years; Gibbons is already spending some time at the agency, and will start fulltime on June 1.

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